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Humanity at Home by Luigi Corrias

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Humanity at Home

WHAT DOES 'HOME' MEAN DURING THE CORONACRISIS?

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In legal cases on human rights and international law and politics, a concept of humanity is evoked which has no clear legal definition. My project is to construct the international legal concept of humanity by looking at cases of dehumanisation.

The Corona crisis has confined humanity to staying at home. The Holocaust survivor Jean Améry famously held a passionate plea for the need for home. This need is twofold. On the one hand, one needs a place that is familiar: where one knows the language and is able to read the most subtle signs, the everyday language of gestures and silent expressions. Marcel Proust's famous episode of the **madeleine with tea** comes to mind as a beautiful illustration of the warm reminiscences such a home can give. Most of us have our own madeleines. Améry also points to the need to belong to a political community. The familiar home cannot exist in a vacuum. Such smaller communities are only possible under conditions of security provided by a political community. Unfortunately, politicians have used the argument of home and security to close off borders and

keep 'the other' out. Trump's message that 'this is a foreign virus' is emblematic in this respect.

With the help of Améry we may point to an alternative here. Now that we are forced to work at home with our partners and children, we may rethink the *oikos*: reconsider the relationship between economy and ecology, our values and priorities, our place on the planet among other species. In addition, this is the moment to reimagine political community. For even if humanity seems to be in this together, the truth is that this crisis does not hit all of us equally hard. **Some have no familiar home to return to**, are far from their partners and children, fleeing the very community that was supposed to provide them security. For the lucky ones, this might be the moment to rethink politics and solidarity in smaller and larger communities, within and beyond borders.

This might have your interest too

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From a Fellow to Fellows during the Corona Crisis

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